

HAMEVASER

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Many Revel Courses Available To Students

by Josh Lamm

During the recent spring registration period, YP students were once again faced with the decision of which one of the six Bible courses offered they would choose to fulfill their Bible requirements. A handful of YP upper-classmen were confronted with an even tougher decision because of the joint program with the Bernard Revel Graduate School which offers them four additional courses. Jewish Studies students were presented with twelve additional graduate courses which can be taken for undergraduate credit.

These extra courses, sixteen in all, represent an opportunity that most students, unfortunately, are not aware of. YC for many years has had a joint program with the Bernard Revel Graduate School whereby students can take graduate courses and receive undergraduate credit for them. Most of these courses are listed in the YC "Schedule of Courses, 1976-1977" and they cover various topics such

as "Biblical Exegesis" or "Readings in Responsa Literature". All of these courses are ideal both for the Jewish Studies majors, and for any sincere student interested in Jewish Studies. The only requirements for the joint program are permission from the Dean of YC, from the Dean of BRGS, and, perhaps most crucial of all, a sense of seriousness and motivation.

In two separate interviews, Dean Bacon of YC, and Dean Soloveitchik of BRGS briefly spoke of the program, its history, and its problems.

Why the joint program? Dr. Bacon answered that a major consideration was the "proximity" of Revel to the undergraduate campus. "There is no reason why Revel should not be used by our undergraduates. It's here, so let our students make the most of it."

Dr. Soloveitchik answers from the vantage point of a student who may undertake graduate work in

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Dr. Lamm Is Guest Speaker At Annual Chanukah Chaggigah

A large crowd of students filled the Main *Bet Midrash* on the night of December 21, to participate in an evening combining festive rejoicing with educational growth. The occasion was SOY's annual Chanukah *chaggigah*, an event that enjoyed unprecedented success this year. SOY's decision to use the *Bet Midrash* for the celebration, the fact that many RIETS *rebbeim* were in attendance, and the presence of YU president Dr. Norman Lamm, all contributed to the success of this year's project.

A short while after the *chaggigah* had begun, SOY president Neil Maron introduced President Lamm to the room of seated students. In his remarks, Maron drew a parallel between the Macabee's Chanukah battle and the war for spiritual survival facing today's Jewish community. He emphasized that Rabbi Lamm's past achievements and future goals demonstrate his position in the forefront of this battle.

Dr. Lamm began his address by pointing to the sad state of affairs which the Jew often beholds around him. He cited the unstable Israeli government as an example of the "dresh" situations we frequently witness. In fact,



however, our awareness of an event, the external appearance, is not infrequently markedly different than the true reality of that event.

In making this point, Dr. Lamm offered a chassidic interpretation of the famous argument between *Bet Hillel* and *Bet Shammai* (regarding the question whether the number of Chanukah candles lit increases nightly or decreases nightly). According to this explanation, the controversy ultimately revolves around the question: is it the appearance or the reality of the miracle which we follow in lighting the menorah. Another major point in President Lamm's address was the role of YU students in today's community,

specifically their duty to study Torah. The prohibition to use the Chanukah lights is in sharp contrast with the American utilitarian lifestyle, which values things only for their practical worth, and quite typically, even relies on such



phrases as "what's the use" to express dejection.

In calling for a revitalization of Torah *Lishmah* at Yeshiva, Dr. Lamm was careful to mention that the application of religious knowledge toward a career — such as the rabbinate or *chinuch* — should not be viewed as a negation of Torah *Lishmah*. Dr. Lamm cited the comments of the *Ba'al HaMaor* to bolster his contention that the *halakic* constraint on utilizing the candles does, not apply when the benefit to be derived is sacred.

The student and *rebbeim* were very responsive to Dr. Lamm's remarks, and the remainder of the *chaggigah* was highlighted by lively singing and dancing.

Novel Educational Methods Used At A Riverdale Hebrew School

by Phillip Kaplan and Mark Dratch

"Of all the *Yeshivot* and of all the places that I've been at, the only place that I saw that didn't turn kids off from Yidduskeit was S.A.R."

These words of a former student teacher at the Salanter Akiba Riverdale (S.A.R.) Academy bespeak the success of this ultra-modern, open classroom Yeshiva

G-d and His Torah, but also one for *Klal Yisrael*. The school, though, feels that a great deal of learning goes on outside the classroom and therefore sponsors such activities as off-campus *Shabbatonim*, field trips, and joint programs with a local senior citizens home and the indigent elderly of the Bronx. The theory is that the combination of living Torah Judaism along with learning

product of an Israeli yeshiva and Yeshiva University, was procured to administrate. The first step he took in establishing the new school was the incorporation of an open education program. The Rabbi explained that "open education is a dual concept. One (aspect) is the building and the other is the program. In its epitome, it's an open program in an open building." This ideal was realized in 1974, when the school moved to its present open facility in Riverdale.

Advantages

Utilizing as few internal barriers as possible, the staircase-like construction of the building facilitates the free movement necessary for an open program. Yet, the lack of walls doesn't lead to a chaotic situation, as the varying levels of the staircases offer sufficient demarcation of students to their class's area. Beside those areas on each of the edifice's five levels that are used for class work, there are several specialized accommodations: a learning resource center (library), a science research department (lab) and a practical arts center (the place where you get finger paints).

Rabbi Chwat explained the open program by outlining its advantages:

—the fact that there is more than one instructor in a class allows the student to find the adult with whom he can best relate "without feeling that his classes have been changed or a teacher has been angered."

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Rabbi Blech Inaugurates New JSS Lecture Series

by Mark Dratch

On December 16, Rabbi Benjamin Blech, a J.S.S. *rebbe* and President of the National Council of Young Israel, all but announced the exact time of *mashiach's* arrival. Speaking in Rubín *shul*, Rabbi Blech was the first speaker in a lecture series sponsored by the J.S.S. Student Council. Almost one hundred people crowded into the *shul* to hear the charismatic speaker reveal the meanings of *gemarot* and *rishonim* which predict the arrival of *mashiach*.

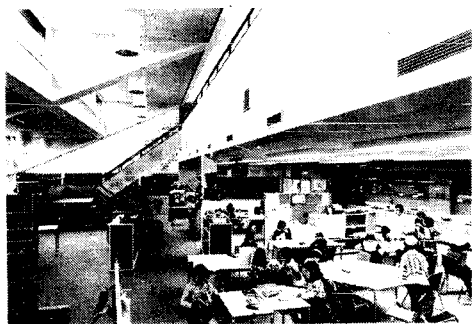
Two Views

His major proof was the *gemara* in *Rosh Hashanah* (10b), which records a disagreement between Rabbi *Eliezer* and Rabbi *Yehoshua* as to the events which occurred during the months of *Tishre* and *Nisan*. Rabbi *Eliezer* states that in *Tishre* the world was created, the patriarchs were born and died (admitting, however, that *Yitzchak* was born in *Nisan*).

Rabbi Blech quoted the *Maharal's* citing of a parallel

disagreement between these two *tannaim*. Understanding of one dispute will aid us in understanding the other. The discussion, found in a commentary on the Book of Proverbs, records that Rabbi *Eliezer* believes that the source of wisdom is found in the head, while Rabbi *Yehoshua* claims its source to be the heart. Rabbi Blech clearly showed the audience how these ideas can be traced to the Bible, in the figures of King David and his son, Solomon. David stood for the "head theory." He began his Book of Psalms with the letter *aleph*, the first letter of the alphabet, and ended it with *kaf* and *lamed*, the letters found in the middle. He was born on *Shavout*, symbolizing Torah and learning, and blessed his son with wisdom in building the Temple, a clear departure from the gift of *chokmat lev*, as found in the Biblical discussion of the Tabernacle. Solomon began his Book of Proverbs with a *mem*, and ended with the end of the alphabet. He composed Judaism's love story, *Shir Ha'Shirim* and built the First

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Open Classrooms

Day School. "We have the same goals as other *Yeshivot*," commented Rabbi Sheldon Chwat, the school's principal, "but the vehicle we use is a little different."

Living and Learning

The institution, basing its philosophy on three major principles of *ahavat torah*, *Am Yisrael* and *Eretz Yisrael*, tries to inculcate into its students a love, not only for

it help reinforce its ideals in the students.

Open Education

S.A.R., established in 1969 by a consolidation of three financially failing *Yeshivot* in the Bronx, combined the schools' various philosophies and emerged with a totally new concept in education. At the time of the changeover, Rabbi Chwat, a young and imaginative

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Necessary Improvements

The opening of the Benjamin Cardozo School of Law undoubtedly represents a significant step forward for Yeshiva. By providing for the educational community a law school to run under Jewish auspices, YU has guaranteed that its impact will be felt in still more scholastic horizons and professional disciplines. But the operation of a law school by Yeshiva bears a deeper meaning for the Jewish community. The heart of Jewish scholarship lies in its complex legal system and the precise manner in which the Torah's laws were explicated in the Talmud and Codes. It was hoped that a law school overseen by Yeshiva would utilize these rich treasures of Jewish learning, by affording students the opportunity to employ Jewish concepts in advancement of their legal education.

A clear prerequisite for attainment of these goals in Jewish scholarship, must, however, be a firm ground of Jewish commitment. HAMEVASER was therefore troubled to learn that petitions calling for the opening of Cardozo's library on Shabbat have recently been circulated among students at the law school.

It is disheartening to see that these students choose to ignore the Yeshiva University banner under which they study. It is unfortunate that the law school's potentiality for helping Jewish students arrive at a deeper comprehension of "synthesis" must be set aside so that more fundamental aspects of Jewish observance can be securely ingrained into the school's operation. It is distressing to see that a law school "under Jewish auspices" is in threat of seeing elements in this uniqueness slowly eroded away.

We hope that YU's graduates now at Cardozo will help weather this storm and will help bring to fruition those achievements which the law school is capable of providing.

The editor-in-chief and governing board of HAMEVASER extend heartfelt condolences to Rabbi Marvin Schnaidman upon the loss of his wife. May he and his family be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

Achieved Improvements

Of the various student activities organized by Yeshiva's undergraduate councils, few have provoked as much controversy as the SOY-sponsored *chaggigot*. In the last few years, angry debates regarding proper rules of governance for the annual Purim *chaggigah*, resulted in feelings of divisiveness and dissent among the entire student body.

The Chanukah *chaggigah*, on the other hand, never enjoyed the popular appeal which the Purim celebration held, nor did it evoke tense emotional conflict. Frequently the attendance was disappointing; on some occasions barely more than a handful of students elected to participate. In those instances that the *chaggigah* did attract a large turnout, the participants conduct at times transformed the air of festivity into an uncontrolled scene of mass *chilul Hashem*.

HAMEVASER commends this year's SOY leadership for finally reversing this sad trend. This year's *chaggigah*, featuring YU President Norman Lamm as the guest speaker, attracted a large number of students from several schools, and was permeated throughout by an inspiring sense of *ruach*. The *chaggigah's* overwhelming success was evidenced by the vigorous participation of almost all the RIETS *rebbeim*.

Ultimately it is the student body and its responsiveness to an event that brings success or failure to that activity. However, it was the efforts of SOY's executive council, their planning, preparation, and advertising that furnished a *chaggigah* which brought out the "yeshiva bochor" in everyone. Their selfless labor provided the Yeshiva with a model of organization that can and should be used for years to come.

Suggested Improvements

Yeshiva's *semicha* program has always depended largely on student feedback in its continuing attempt to upgrade the quality of the program.

Firmly believing that their *semicha* training should be of a caliber that truly merits the title "Rabbi," YU's students have often been instrumental in proposing and implementing ameliorative measures.

In thinking of ways to improve the *semicha* program, a look to the past reveals ideas that did not relate specifically to the *semicha* curriculum but nevertheless enhanced the program's overall organization.

The *Chag-Ha-Semicha* was a celebration held every third or fourth year honoring all the *semicha* graduates during that period. This festive occasion allowed the Yeshiva community to congratulate the *musmachim* on their achievement, while imbuing with a sense of pride those individuals whose devoted study had brought them this scholastic distinction. HAMEVASER believes that reinstatement of the *Chag-Hasemicha* would continue to serve these same purposes and would be a most worthy project under Yeshiva's new leadership.

Another idea worthy of revitalization is the RIETS catalogue. This booklet clarified for the *semicha* student: what primary and supplementary subject matter was required of him, and described the available learning opportunities.

The publication of a revised RIETS brochure would help alleviate much of the present confusion regarding the prescribed courses of study for *semicha* students.

From The Editor's Desk

Self-Construct



Michael Muschel

One of the striking features of today's American Jewish community is its substantial non-American roots. Many American Jews who fall under the broad heading "Orthodox" are not native U.S. citizens but rather European immigrants. Indeed, some of Yeshiva's strongest financial supporters over the last few decades are included in this category of people, who, because of trying political circumstances, were forced to flee their European homelands and settle in the United States. Few of these people received their formal education in Yeshiva University schools. Few were motivated by their own educational experiences at Yeshiva to become supporters of the institution. Rather, it was primarily the contacts these individuals made with YU people, out-of-classroom encounters, fund-raising campaigns, that provided the motivational impetus for their generosity.

If we allow ourselves an objective look to the future, we perceive an altogether different picture. There is no reason to anticipate any mass influx of Jews into the United States during the next several decades. The individuals who will carry YU's financial burden in fifty years — and an ever-increasing burden, at that — will be American-born, American-bred, American-educated. American-educated. It is no miscalculation to assert that in a half-century, YU will be turning to its own graduates for monetary support. To men and women who graduated Yeshiva's schools in the nineteen-seventies and eighties.

Will these future calls for monetary support elicit positive responses? Will alumni's memories of their years at Yeshiva be overwhelmingly favorable ones, sufficiently potent to move them to provide needed financial assistance? These questions are important ones, and failure on the part of the administration to meet them head on would be most improvident.

It is unfortunate that an honest evaluation of the present student mood at Yeshiva cannot conclusively answer these questions. Perhaps Yeshiva students are more wont to be dissatisfied; perhaps again there are matters at YU that students can justifiably be dissatisfied with. The point here, however, is that the state of mind of today's YU student will prove crucial to Yeshiva's livelihood, and the administration cannot afford (pun intended) to dismiss student criticism.

What is most ironic is the fact that Yeshiva's financial situation is frequently the very source of student unhappiness. Some of the bitterest complaints heard in First Hall focus on the manner in which educational values are often sacrificed to help ease monetary needs. With the financial crunch always looming over the academic horizon, courses are cancelled, teachers are forced into retirement, and students are bitter. But one must question how much of this sacrificing is, in the long run, financially constructive. I am not suggesting that students must always have their way, only that their opinion should be one component in the decision-making processes at Yeshiva. What is crucial to student satisfaction is not that their voice be given priority, but that it receive serious consideration.

In fact, the Senate, APRAC, and last year's Presidential Search Committee, are examples of institutions that insure constant student input into administrative policy. But the Senate's power is limited, the scope of their activity is confined to academic affairs, and the value of APRAC's achievements is questionable, at best. At this time, however, a special commission is preparing for President Lamm a thorough evaluation of all branches of the university. It is noteworthy that student opinion has been solicited in conducting this study. Hopefully, student feedback, as expressed through such projects, as well as through student government and campus newspapers, will continue to merit the administration's respect.

It is also hoped that in expressing their views, students will follow a pattern of constructive criticism, refraining from an undirected attack on existing institutions and heedful always of the particular ends to be achieved.

Hebrew Academy

(Continued from Page 1)

—increased teacher cooperation in both the planning and the teaching of a class due to the fact there are no obstructions between classrooms . . . the student is therefore afforded with the strength of all teachers.

—shifts the responsibility of learning to the student, creating a two-fold learning atmosphere . . . when something goes wrong (in a learning situation) most schools blame the teacher and never blame the kid."

—the student is allowed to work at his own rate.

S.A.R.'s Yeshiva program is conducted in Hebrew and as such, the 1st and 2nd grade students devote most of their time developing this "mafye'ach." The subsequent curriculum is the same as other *yeshivot*, with a survey of

Chumash, Nevi'im, Mishnah, History (with an emphasis on the Holocaust), and on the 6th to 8th grade level, *Gemara*. The classes are co-ed.

Only thirty percent of S.A.R.'s students come from *shomrei mitzvot* families. Part of the student body is made up Israelis and Russians. The Israeli children here with their parents, who are on *Sh'lichut* or sabbatical, have diversified backgrounds ranging from *Kibbutz Dati* to *Shomer Hatzair*. Seventy-five percent of the school's graduates continue in *yeshiva*.

"We don't think we have all the answers nor do we think that it (the S.A.R. program) will work for everybody. Maybe we're not turning many more kids on," Rabbi Chwat remarked, "but we're not turning anyone off."

Study Opportunities In Revel

(Continued from Page 1)
 Jewish Studies. "If we have something to offer, and indeed we do," said Dr. Soloveitchik, "why in the world start off when the student is twenty-one or twenty-two? Why not expose him to serious study and research on the graduate level, when he is eighteen or nineteen, and if he decides to continue in Jewish Studies, he can carry it that much further."

Both Deans Bacon and Soloveitchik, and the BRGS professors interviewed, feel that for the most part the undergraduate students are doing as well as the graduate students. Dean Bacon reports that the "feedback" from teachers and students involved in the joint program is very positive.

Equality

Many "joint programs" between undergraduate and graduate schools in YU as well as in other colleges may involve some "watering down" of courses, or lowering of standards on the part of the graduate school. When asked if that was so at Revel as well, Dr. Soloveitchik made it clear that this is not the case. "I see no innate difference between the graduate and undergraduate student."

explained Dr. Soloveitchik, "There is no magic line. I only see a distinction between good students and bad students, not between graduate and undergraduate students."

Forced Change

Dean Soloveitchik sees the joint program as not only beneficial to the undergraduate students but to the graduate students and school as well. This program puts constant pressure on the BRGS instructors to create new courses. Since a three year cycle is the ordinary teaching span, if a student is picked up at the undergraduate level and he stays through graduate school, the instructors must change, update, and revitalize their courses so that the student doesn't take a course in his fourth year that he already had in his first.

After interviewing many joint-program students as to the reason they took Revel courses, two common elements can be distilled from their comments.

The first is a general dissatisfaction with undergraduate courses, especially Bible courses. Many feel that the courses were on too low a level, and were not taken

seriously by many students. One student in the joint program, commenting about undergraduate Bible courses said, "There is more to Bible than just translation of words and selections from *Metzudot David* and *Tzion*. They feel the need to attend a course where they can be challenged and in turn challenge a professor or a teacher. Most of them say that Revel has fulfilled that need.

Methodology

The second common element is the basic difference between YC and BRGS (or, for that matter, between any undergraduate and graduate school): that is, the *method* of study utilized by each. In undergraduate school the stress is on "lecture and notes" while in the graduate school it is more on "research and self study" which is much more difficult but far more rewarding. As one student put it, "I was tired of the stenographic nature of many undergraduate courses and felt that I just had to try something different."

Serious Students

When asked which students should take the BRGS graduate courses as an option, Dean Bacon counseled that only the more "serious and willing-to-work" student should consider it.

Surely there are more "serious and willing" undergraduate students than the handful that are taking advantage of the joint program now. Any student in that category ought seriously consider taking one or more of the Revel courses next time he registers.

The only regret of many of the students now involved in the program is that they either didn't know about it or didn't consider it until only recently.

SOY President

Holy Mess



Neil Maron

We have heard much lately about "B.M. in the P.M." and about the upgraded level of learning in the Yeshiva, both during the day, and at night. Learning, however, cannot exist without *sefarim* and people have been complaining about the lack of availability of these *sefarim*. But these *sefarim* are available to people learning in the main *Bet Midrash*. There are three cabinets with all kinds of *sefarim*, including the essentials and a small supply of others which are less used. But they always seem to be locked up. Why? Because, *sefarim* are meant to be borrowed to use and reuse, not to use and discard (or keep). SOY has, at great expense, procured new *sefarim*, and to protect them we have instituted a "reserve" program in the main building *Bet Midrash*.



We are not G-d forbid, suspicious of people deliberately taking or ruining *sefarim*. But for some reason, thousands of dollars worth of *sefarim* are either missing or are in such poor condition as to render them practically useless. It is shameful that in Y.U., where supposedly, bright, ethical *bonei Torah* congregate, it is necessary to resort to such precautions. But how can we allow the libraries in both *batei midrashim* (Furst and Main Building) to continue being the shambles that they are. Students do not bother to return *sefarim* to their appropriate places on the shelves and the *bet midrash* looks like a room full of leftovers from a used book sale.

I ask all *b'nei ha'yeshiva* to please bear with us in our program; to return *sefarim* to their shelves; and to refrain from learning with these *sefarim* in their own rooms. *Sefarim* are not like trays in the cafeteria; no one can be hired to collect them, and we cannot raise our prices either.

I would like to thank Rabbi Solow and the *bachurim* who help run the library for their invaluable assistance

JSS Lecture Series

(Continued from Page 1)
 Temple on Mount Moriah, dedicated with the *avodah* of the *akedah avodah she' be' lev* and the love of the two brothers, recounted in the *Midrash*, who showed Solomon the proper spot for the erection of the Temple.

Referring back to the original *gemara*, Rabbi Blech explained *Rashi's* comment that *Rabbi Yehoshua's* mention of *Nisan* refers not to the month, but to the spring season. He finally learned the decision of the *gemara* to be in favor of *Rabbi Yehoshua*, meaning that *Mashiach* will come during the spring season.

"Not only has the *gemara* ruled like *Rabbi Yehoshua*," claimed Rabbi Blech, "but so too have contemporary events." The *hatchala d'geulah*, beginning of redemption, seen as the returning of Jews to the land of Israel, was seen on the fifth of *Iyar*, a spring month. The retaking of Jerusalem was seen in 1967 on the 28th day of *Iyar*. Based on the *gemara* and subsequent historical events, Rabbi Blech predicted that *Mashiach* will come during *Iyar*, although he refused to forecast the year.

Rabbi Blech cited the two Temples as the embodiment of the two ideals of *lev* and *rosh*. The First Temple was destroyed because of idol worship, which had its origins in the head. Chanukah, the holiday symbolizing the purification of Israel from this sin, is found at the end of the *Tishre* season. That for which the Second Temple was destroyed, *sin'at chinam*, can only be countered through the heart.

Seeing that the *gemara* ruled in favor of *Rabbi Yehoshua*, Rabbi Blech also finds the *antidote* for

our present *galut* as offered by the same Rabbi. He entreated the audience to learn to do *mitzvot* with the *lev*. While it is of the uppermost importance to learn and become *talmidei chakhamin*, one must never forget *mitzvot bein adam l'chavero* and how to serve *Hashem* with *simcha*. Only through the *lev* will we be worthy to see *Mashiach*, may he come speedily in our days.

To the Editor:

In his article "The Yarmulka Problem and Business Ethics" (HAMEVASER Nov. 15, 1976), Rabbi Alfred Cohen asserts that *chilul HaShem* when committed by a prominent religious personality takes place only when others are corrupted or misled by the offender. Consequently, he concludes that wearing a yarmulka while being publicly implicated in illegal business affairs does not constitute a *chilul Hashem* so long as others are not induced to commit similar offenses. Although Rabbi Cohen cites a number of sources which ostensibly support his view, there are a great many more sources which distinctly lead one to the opposite conclusion.

— Firstly, in the same *suggiah* in *Yoma* which Rabbi Cohen cites, *Rabbi Yannai defines chilul HaShem* as "kol shechaveirav misbayshim machmas shemuaso" — anyone whose actions would be a source of embarrassment to his associates. *Abaye* further elaborates that one's actions should endear G-d to others (*sheyhei shem shamayim misaveh al yadcha*) and *chilul Hashem* is diametrically opposed in causing others to say "Woe unto him who has learned Torah — behold how ugly are his

actions." Clearly, *chilul Hashem* as defined by these *Amoraim* is not a matter of corrupting others, but rather its severity lies in the negative image which is created of G-d and His Torah. This interpretation of *chilul Hashem* (literally, desecration of G-d's name) is accepted and cited by the *Alfes* and the *Rosh* on the same *suggiah*. Similarly, the *Rambam* in discussing *chilul Hashem* as it applies to a great person who performs an unbecoming act, nowhere stipulates that it must result in corruption of others. Also in accordance with this view is the famous statement of *Rav Yochanan*' that a *talmid chakham* whose garments are soiled (literally and figuratively) is subject to the death penalty. Again, even according to *Rashi* upon whom *Rabbi Cohen* relies, the offense lies in the tarnished image which is created of Torah.

Having established the definition of *chilul Hashem*, one can now explore the second problem which *Rabbi Cohen* poses: May another prohibition, specifically, that of removing one's yarmulka, be neglected in order to avoid creating a *chilul Hashem*? In this regard the *Chinuch* is cited in his disagreement with those who would

refrain from wearing *t'fillin* in public for fear that they may transgress a prohibition while wearing *t'fillin* and thus cause a *chilul Hashem*. The comparison here would have been in order if the issue were whether businessmen in general should refrain from wearing yarmulkas in public for fear of creating a *chilul Hashem* at some point in the future. Here indeed one might recommend the yarmulka in the hope that it would remind one of his responsibilities and perhaps even create a *kiddush Hashem*. The issue at hand is one of wearing a yarmulka at a critical occasion which will almost assuredly result in *chilul Hashem*. One may reasonably doubt whether the *Chinuch* would recommend wearing a yarmulka or *t'fillin* at such a juncture.

There are, however, Talmudic sources which do not touch on the question at hand. In *Yevamos* the *gemara* relates that in his restitution to the Givonim for the crimes of King Saul (Samuel II Ch. 21), King David transgressed the serious prohibition of *lo yumsu avos al bonim* — sons shall not die for the sins of their fathers. This was done, as *Rashi* explains, to avoid *chilul Hashem* in the eyes of other nations who may conclude

that the Jewish nation allows crimes to go unpunished. In this regard *Rabbi Yochanan* states: "Better a letter be uprooted from the Torah and G-d's name not be desecrated publicly." The *gemara* in *Sanhedrin*' *furitta* relates that King David, in pursuing *Abshalom*, preferred to appear as an idolator rather than a G-d-fearing man while butchering his own son, lest others questions the merits of G-d. "Better he worship idols and G-d's name not be publicly desecrated."

In conclusion, although I am not a *posek* and therefore certainly not competent to rule on individual cases, I personally feel that the issues raised by *Rabbi Cohen* should not be taken lightly as more and more *Bnei Torah* enter the public arena as representatives of *Klal Yisrael* and the opportunities for *chilul Hashem* as well as *kiddush Hashem* present themselves.

Sincerely,
 Jacob S. Walfish, M.D.
 YC '70

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Yoma 84a
- 2 Mishne Torah Hilchot Yevados: Nazira Ch. 5 Hal
- 3 Shabbat 114a
- 4 Sefer HaChinuch Mitzvah 420
- 5 Yevamos 79a
- 6 Sanhedrin 70a

HAMEVASER
 WISHES ALL STUDENTS BEST
 OF LUCK ON THEIR FINAL
 EXAMINATIONS, AND A
 PLEASANT WINTER VACATION

Enlightening The Menorah

by Phil Solomon

The Chanukah menorah, while providing light is in many ways shrouded in darkness. Judaism, while abounding in symbols, usually maintains that the commandments concerning any *yom-tov* have both a direct connection with the historical event for which the holiday is celebrated, as well as a definite purpose — an effect on the person who does the *mitzvah*. The menorah seems to fail on both accounts. While we speak of the military victory of "many in the hands of few" in our prayers, there is virtually no reference made to the historic event in our observance. When we light the menorah we proclaim that we have no right to derive any benefit from the light of the menorah, only to see it, thereby seeming to say that it is a "useless" *mitzvah*. One may wish to answer that this is an unfair criticism, since the menorah is a means of publicizing the miracle, and that by not deriving benefit from the menorah, we highlight the publicizing of the miracle, thus recalling the historical event which it commemorates. While this is true, it is however, inadequate to explain many of the details found in the *halakha* concerning the menorah.

suffice for one person in each place to light the menorah. Also, why do *chazal* forbid the menorah to be moved to a window after it is already lit, and why is it necessary to light it specifically in a room where there is already another light? One would think that the menorah would be more noticeable in a dark room. Finally, if *chazal* felt that Chanukah was so important that it was necessary to perform the *mitzvah* in the most beautiful way possible, then why does the *gemarah Shabbas 21b* say that they waited *l'shanah acharet* (until the next year) to establish the *chag*?

In the Dark

And so the Chanukah menorah, far from being a sensible observance, leaves us pretty much in the dark. It may be possible to enlighten ourselves as to why we light the menorah, and provide answers to some of our questions by analyzing the nature of the miracle we are publicizing.

It is well known that Chanukah, unlike Purim, does not represent an external victory of Jew over pagan, as much as an internal one of Jew over Jew. It was not so much a triumph over the Hellenists as over the Hellenizers within our midst. The basic dispute between the two

oriented.

Since this was the crux of the conflict, *chazal* felt it was necessary to have one *mitzvah* which would portray itself not just as a particular need in a specific situation, but as an overall organizing value around which we plan our lives. Seen in this light, it is quite understandable that *chazal* chose light as the mode of expression for the *mitzvah* because light is indeed such an organizing phenomenon. By proclaiming that we have no right to "use" the candles, *chazal* are reminding us that religion is not merely a necessity to be called forth and later forgotten, depending on the situation, but an overall value by which we must arrange our lives. By requiring the menorah to be lit only in a lighted room, perhaps *chazal* were trying to tell us that religion is necessary not only when someone is helplessly and helplessly in the dark, but that even in a life which may seem sufficiently bright and complete without religion, the menorah can and must be lit; each person must light the menorah himself. To have only one person in each family light the menorah may well fill the need of *pirsumei nisah*, but since the *mitzvah* reminds us that religion is,

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The NCSY Movement: Some Brief History

by Henry Kamioner

The following article is based on an interview with Rabbi Baruch Lanner, a leader in one of the most dynamic and successful youth movements Judaism has to offer: The National Conference of Synagogue Youth (NCSY), which is the official youth division of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America. Presently, Rabbi Lanner serves as National Director of Junior NCSY and Regional Director of the New Jersey *Etz Chaim* region. In his spare time, Baruch gives a *shiur* at the Stern *kollel* and is a part time teacher at the Frisch Yeshiva High School in Paramus, New Jersey.

B'reishit

It all began in the late 1950's with a young man by the name of Pinchas Stolper, a graduate of YUHS-B and a *musmach* of Yeshiva University. Rabbi Stolper first became the North American Commander of *Beitar* and then stepped up to the position of NCSY's first National Director. Rabbi Stolper also learned under *Rav Kutner in Chafetz Chaim*. All these experiences gave him many insights into the *derekh* of how the organization was to be run. The main goal of NCSY was, and still is *kiruv r'chokim*.

Unfortunately, communities at that time were making halakic sacrifices in their synagogues to combat the assimilation of their youth, including mixed seating and dancing. Rabbi Stolper entered these communities with a "no compromise" attitude; only a strict adherence to *halakha* would be tolerated. As the trail blazer for NCSY Rabbi Stolper met many difficult obstacles. Nevertheless, with his great perseverance and love both for people and the Torah, Rabbi Stolper was able to overcome what seemed to be insurmountable barriers. Rabbi David Cohen, first assistant to the director must also be viewed in the same favorable light. Eventually Rabbi Cohen was to become director of the UOJCA. Together these two men laid the foundations of NCSY.

Charismatic Leader

Soon, another BTA-YU graduate, Chaim Wasserman, joined the organization. Rabbi Wasserman, the spiritual leader of the Young Israel of Passaic-Clifton New Jersey, is currently on sabbatical teaching in Yerushalayim. Before taking the Young Israel position, Rabbi Wasserman spent the most dramatic years of his life

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First of all, it is interesting to note that the concept of publicizing a miracle is never emphasized concerning other miracles in the Torah or Rabbinical *chagim*. Far greater miracles are mentioned in the Torah, yet *pirsum ha'nes* is not stressed as it is for Chanukah. And not only does Chanukah receive special emphasis, but there is even a prescribed form of *hidur mitzvah*. The Shulchan Arukh tells us that if a person is able, he should buy even a menorah of silver, a seemingly extravagant law for purely symbolic observance. Also curious is the fact that in the controversy concerning how many candles are to be lit, the opinion that the same number of candles should be lit daily, is never mentioned, even though it seems to be a better commemoration of the miracle, since the flame in the temple remained constant.

Esence

Among other *halakhot* relating to the menorah which are difficult to explain when viewed from a perspective of *pirsumei nisah* is the fact that lighting the candles is the essence of the *mitzvah*. If the emphasis is on publicity, then of what benefit is the menorah if it is extinguished? Also, the *mitzvah*, when performed in its best way, requires each individual to light his own menorah. If the sole criterion is *pirsumei nisah*, then it should

groups was the nature and role of religion. The Hellenizers did not seek to eliminate religion, only to confine it, or, in *chazal's* words, *v'timu et hashmanim* — not to destroy the oil, but merely to pollute it. They claimed that religion was indeed necessary as one part of a multifaceted life, but that its role must be limited to just that — to be one part rather than an all pervasive influence. It was possible to be religious at home perhaps, but not when it publicly conflicted with national or international interests.

Torah Light Bulb

The *Hashmonaim* and the Torah, however, thought otherwise. As they understood it, the Torah could not be merely one aspect of a complex life. The Torah must be the light, the organizing principle by which we see how all the other pieces of our lives fit together. To say that Torah is the supreme value does not mean that one can do nothing else but learn, but that all one's endeavors must be viewed from a Torah perspective. As *Rav Aaron Solovitchik* once explained, just as one does not stare at a light bulb, but a red bulb causes the whole room to appear red, and a green bulb causes the room to appear green, similarly can or Torah, a Torah light bulb, cause our entire lives to be Torah-

Mit-picking

Faithfully Scientific

Ronald Mitnick

This past summer, many of us were witnesses to an event representing the apex of Man's technological achievement, the landing of two Viking spacecraft on the surface of the planet Mars. Despite the complexity of this awesome feat, there are those who aren't at all enthused by project Viking. Some people feel that the enormous amount of money spent for Project Viking could have been spent more usefully had it gone into social programs on our own planet. However, others with whom I have spoken, have stated that to believe in the existence of extraterrestrial life is contrary to Jewish teaching, going so far as to call such a belief *apikorsut*. Naturally, they felt that, since there is no point in searching for life on other worlds, there is no point in Project Viking.

This attitude aroused my curiosity, and I decided to find out whether or not it really is *apikorsut* to believe in the existence of life on other worlds. I called Rabbi Yaakov Weinberg of Ner Yisrael Rabbinical College, in Baltimore. In response to my question, he answered that there is no opinion found in *Chazal* which either affirms or denies the possibility of the existence of extraterrestrial

life, and that whatever is empirically found would determine whether or not it exists. Furthermore, Rabbi Norman Lamm wrote in Faith and Doubt that the existence of life on other worlds would in no way lower the spiritual status of Man.

These responses were sufficient to clear up any uncertainty that I may have had in this matter. But the attitude of those persons, who were so vehement because of their misinformation as to implicate many people as *apikorsim*, brought a very disturbing inclination to light, namely the unwillingness to integrate science with Torah. This problem manifests itself in a number of ways. In some, it is demonstrated by a total separation from scientific thought and a preference not to be exposed to "anti-Torah" attitudes. However, even here at Yeshiva University, where the philosophy in regards to learning is based on the ideal of *Torah U'Madah*, many students consider their secular studies to be completely separate from their Torah learning.

Rabbi Lamm states in Faith and Doubt, "No religious position is loyally served by refusing to consider ...

theories which may well turn out to be facts." We don't deny scientific fact; instead, we should use these new facts to better understand our Torah. Of course, it is imperative to view scientific thought in a proper perspective, always remembering that the Universe is not run by mathematical probability or chance, but by *Hashem*. However, if science is studied with this proper perspective, it could actually have the effect of strengthening one's faith.

And yet, despite the incredible complexity of biological organism, how many students are awed by *ma'asey Hashem* when studying biology? How many students, when studying physics appreciate the unity with which *Hashem* created the universe? Even though we do not refuse to study science, many refuse to integrate it with their Torah learning. Consequently, we are wasting one of the unique opportunities that Yeshiva University offers, the ability to study secular subjects in a Torah atmosphere. Hopefully, recognition of this will cause Y.U. students to reevaluate their studies and bring even more meaning to their years at YU.

Care Of The Terminal Patient: Reviewing The Torah Viewpoint

by Martin Thaler

This article is primarily based upon a lecture delivered recently by Rabbi Dr. M.D. Tendler, at the Conference on Bereavement and Grief, as well as AECOM and across the country.

Due to technological advances in medical care, the life of a terminally ill patient can be extended. The failure of an organ system, once equated with imminent death, is now the domain of new specialties. Kidney dialysis units, organ transplants, more efficient respirators, and such, have prolonged life while presenting to society a plethora of moral and religious dilemmas.

Postulates

To approach these problems, we must first define several terms. There are several axioms banded about, serving more to disguise truths than to clarify them. One such axiom refers to the "infinite value of human life." This is apparently true, but what of our attitude towards the neglect of proper nutrition and health care prevalent among our lower classes? Do we do everything to help save the abused child, whose life may be in more jeopardy than that of a hospital patient? In other words, how invasive is this value system?

At what personal cost must this value be preserved? What of the life of pain and mental anguish that an incapacitated patient may be doomed to? What about the unbearable emotional and financial costs to his family? In many of these terminal cases, is there a distinction between saving, i.e. prolonging, life, and simply postponing death? Or is this an objective value, independent of the particulars of each case?

This leads us into an analysis of another axiom. If there are indeed some cases wherein a decision is made to ignore the first axiom, then that decision must be made by the mentally competent patient himself. Does he have this right? Does he even have the right to

know specific details of his condition?

The *Yoreh Deah* (337) states that if a relative of a seriously ill man dies, we may not inform the patient of his relative's passing, lest he become overly depressed and die. Moreover, even if he does find out, we may not do *kriah* for him nor mourn in front of him, lest he become afraid that he too will die, and his will-power will weaken. We clearly see that the *halakha* is concerned with the psychological effects of distressing news on the patient, and that the "whole truth" is not an absolute good. An intelligent patient can be made aware that his condition is serious, in order to permit him to put his affairs in order, without telling him exactly how serious it is. The doctor may only give him information which cannot prove

harmful. *Halakha* goes so far in this concern that the final *vidui* is postponed until *noteh lamut*; as the *Bach* comments, as late as is possible. Even then, it is introduced by, "many have confessed and lived . . . and the reward for your confession should be life."

Suicide

This brings us to the next point. Can the patient refuse life-saving treatment? Suicide is prohibited in the *halakha*, and in virtually all ethical systems. Similarly, we could not condone a patient's refusing treatment that promises cure. But what if continued therapy promises only a prolongation of a life of terrible pain, discomfort, or psychological trauma — and the patient requests that treatment be discontinued? The *gemara* in *Avodah Zarah* (18a) tells the

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Between Rebbe And Student

by Steven Mandel

Throughout a student's Yeshiva education, he is constantly reminded about the duties, responsibilities, and respect that he should have for his Hebrew teachers. In fact, the Talmud and the *Rambam* enumerate in great detail how a *talmid* (student) who has entered into higher education (the *bet midrash*) should treat and honor his Rav (teacher). These laws have been taught and widely publicized. On the other hand those areas where a Rav must be respectful of his students' rights and sensitive to his feelings are not very well known.

What does the term Rav mean? The *Rambam* explains that it is incumbent upon every scholar in Israel . . . to instruct all who desire

to be his students . . . for it says "And you shall teach them diligently to your children" (Deut. 6:7) which is traditionally interpreted as including students, for students are also called children.' Thus to be a Rav one must first be a scholar (*talmid chakham*). A scholar is one who wishes to be adorned by the crown of Torah.' He makes the study of Torah a fixed occupation and lets secular work engage him only casually.' But he not only learns Torah but also practices it as is taught "study is not the most important thing but rather practice.'" (putting into action that which one has studied). A Rav is a person who is worthy to be appointed as leader of a community. He thus serves as a model for the Jewish community and is criticized more severely if he errs. A scholar must wear becoming and clean clothes and it is forbidden to have a spot or grease or anything of a like unclean nature found upon his garment.' If you see a scholar sin at night do not gossip about him because perhaps he has done penance; but if he has misappropriated money he may be criticized until he returns it to his owner.' In addition, any place where there is a desecration of g-d's name one does not extend honor to a Rav.' Also, if the Rav is like a messenger of the Lord of Host, they seek the law at his mouth.'



A Rav then is a man steeped in the wisdom of Torah, a man of action, a man who must decide the law for an entire community, and most important of all a teacher. The student must recognize the Rav's great importance. He is obligated to give him even more respect than his own father because his father only brought him into this world while the teacher who teaches wisdom brings him into the life to come.'

Definitions

Who is the student's Rav? How does one go about acquiring a Rav? The Talmud records many opinions in this matter. In the *Fathers*,¹ according to *Rav Natun*, it says that a student should find a permanent teacher to learn text, *mishna*, *midrash*, *halakha*, and *agada*. *Rav Yehuda* says it is the person from whom he (the student) got most of his wisdom. *Rav Meir* says that the one who taught him wisdom. *Rav Yossi* says even if he taught him only one *mishna*.² The Jerusalem Talmud adds that (A Rav is he) who taught him (the student) Torah first.³

Perhaps we may say that a Rav is any or all of these definitions. What may certainly be gleaned

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Senior-Writin

A Modest Proposal

Joseph Rosenbluh



As part of the 1977 Bicentennial Celebration, we Americans have been granted a new democratic right. Two hundred years after Thomas Jefferson wrote in the Declaration of Independence . . . that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness," the Supreme Court has handed down a decision declaring, in effect, that all men are also endowed by their Creator (if not by their Creator, certainly by their Supreme Court) with the unalienable right to die. It remains, however, to be decided if this truth is as self-evident as those of Thomas Jefferson.

It costs the taxpayers about \$10,000 annually to provide food, clothing, shelter and rehabilitation for each convict in prison. Besides that, prison of-

officials are constantly on guard to prevent prisoners from committing suicide. But all this becomes unnecessary because now, prisoners have the right to die. Now, the government can pay a prisoner to die just as was done in ancient China; or a rich man who had been sentenced to capital punishment could pay a poor sucker to take his place at the execution. Each prisoner condemned to die can be offered the following proposition:

Welcome to Death Row. We hope you will find your stay here enjoyable. But why postpone the inevitable? If you wait for nature to take its course you will miss the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to choose how you would like to die. Maybe you would like to be beheaded like Queen Marie Antoinette, or hanged like the American martyr, Nathan Hale. Were you a childhood admirer of Abraham Lincoln? Then maybe you would like to be shot as he was. By a special government grant, if you die before the end of the current fiscal year, beneficiaries whom you name will receive an annual stipend from the state. And that's not all! If you leave your body to science the stipend will be increased. So don't delay — die today.

Ridiculous? Very much so. But this is the implication of the recent Supreme Court Decision. On January 17, 1977, Gary Gilmore is scheduled to die by a firing squad in Utah.

If the execution indeed takes place he will die, not because he murdered two people, but only because he sought to die. Meanwhile, many convicted murderers remain alive and eligible for parole because as far as they are concerned, capital punishment is "cruel and unusual." This is not the place to restate the hackneyed arguments for and against capital punishment. Whether in favor of capital punishment or not, the American public yearns for consistent punishment. The possibility of execution should not depend

on a judge and jury's whim, mood, or prejudice, but on their thorough investigation and verification of the charge.

Gary Gilmore is not only a murderer, but a man with masochistic and suicidal tendencies while in jail. He staged a long hunger strike and attempted suicide twice. He has elected not only to die but how to die. Gilmore has requested that his face not be covered and that he be allowed to stand at his execution, just as a man in a restaurant would request a steak, medium rare. On January 17, Gilmore expects to finally commit his long sought after suicide, with the sanction of the United States Supreme Court.

Such a situation would not arise in a Torah-oriented society. The possibility for capital punishment, though very real, is also very remote, because of the extensive investigation required of the Jewish court by *halakha*. Moreover, in Jewish law, suicide is at least as great a crime as homicide, though the culprit, for technical reasons, goes unpunished. Thus, if a person were not sentenced to death (or as is the case in the United States, where such a sentence will probably not be carried out) his desire for death would not be honored.

While assuming the right to die, American society has denied the right to life. Our own community tolerates the murder of fetuses through abortion and so-called terminal patients through euthanasia. Abortion, euthanasia and the Right to Die are euphemisms for three different acts of murder. Judaism recognizes that life is a Divine loan and therefore may be withdrawn only by G-d or certain human agents in execution of His Divine Law. "G-d hath given," and logically, "G-d hath taken away."

The right for a person to die is not given to the man himself, by either G-d or the United States Supreme Court, but rests firmly in the hands of G-d.

Randomly Distributed Words

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found inconsistent by some nit-picker. (Life is tough). Interestingly, if one is willing not to distinguish between things perceived "concretely" and things "imagined," new possibilities emerge. To wit, if fear is sensed, a *Mazik* is said to exist. What this means is that there is nothing to fear but fear itself. (Don't cringe. This makes as little sense to me as it does to you.) In any event, what has become clear is that there is precious little philosophical speculation which has been cut, dried, and laid out on a platter as the "essence" of Judaism.

Even if well-defined philosophical, scientific and historical axioms should be decided upon, we still must contend with the objectivity of the mind. Since any attempt at reasoning demands the acceptance of the fundamental assumption of science, belief is not a product of choice but rather a

strict function of observation. A guy who doesn't believe, for example, that the Maalot tragedy was a consequence of faulty *mezuzot* is no heretic for the simple reason that nobody (not possessed of uncommon insight) can buy a story like that. It is easier to say, "I believe X is true," than to say, "X is true," as if there is no doubt about it. We can choose to act (I think), but we can't choose to believe.

Value judgments are either lacking in cognitive meaning or strictly conjectural, and all that we can do, is to perform each *Mitzvah*, with precision and consistency and — ipso facto — we are believers.

An additional note to those pseudo-intellectuals who prefer name dropping to content, Epicurus, *Ra'avad*, Spinoza, Kant, Descartes, Freud, William James, Bertrand Russel, No-Nick Ayes, Yeshayahu Leibovitch, Karl and Groucho Marx.

Rabbi Moshe Poleyeff: Rebbe To Three Generations

It was ten years ago, on 2 Kislev 5727, that the soul of Harav Moshe Poleyeff was taken to the Yeshiva shel maaloh. A decade has passed since his soft voice was stilled. Now, ten years later, there probably isn't a single student at our Yeshiva today who was here when Rav Poleyeff gave his last shiur. Yet his memory is revered by his many talmidim all over the world, and he is remembered with love and respect by the many whose lives he touched.

In observance of the tenth Yahrzeit of Hagaon Harav Poleyeff, and in order that this generation of talmidim become more familiar with one of the greats that our Yeshiva was blessed with, this brief portrait of a beloved rebbi is presented.

Rav Poleyeff was born in Timkowitz on Lag B'Omer in the year 5648 (1888) to Yisrael and Chana Poleyeff. His father was a melamed in Timkowitz and it is from him that his son received his first Torah learning. When he was 12 he left for the Yeshiva of Slutsk, where he was to remain for almost ten years and to become one of the talmidim muvhakim of its Rosh Yeshiva, Hagaon Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer.

Patterns

Rav Poleyeff quickly earned the reputation as a *masmid* and a thorough student who could not rest if a question in the *gemara* was not clear in his mind. Once, on a Purim day, when all the *bochurim* were fulfilling the *mitzvah* of "chayav dom livsumel..." he could not be found. His friends

sought him out, and discovered him poring over a *gemara Gittin*. It seems that an unanswered question, raised during a recent shiur, gave him no rest. Before he could join his friends in the proper observance of Purim, he had to find some solution to the question. For the rest of his life he retained this characteristic pattern: a problem would give him no peace until he had solved it, or had established to his satisfaction that there seemed to be no solution.

Rav Isser Zalman recognized this characteristic in his talmid when he wrote of him in the early 1900s "he possesses straight-forward logic, a singular capability at developing new thoughts and concepts, and 'blessed' with a clear and thorough understanding." Later when Rav Poleyeff received *semicha* from his rebbi, the latter added: "And may he become a *gadol* and teacher, for he is verily a *kadav beTorah* equal to the most distinguished and expert *rabbanim*."

Assistant

While at *Yeshivat Slutsk*, Rav Poleyeff demonstrated his unusual ability as a *mechadesh* and also as a clear and orderly writer of "Torah," characteristics which were later to become one of his unique distinctions. In the 1900s *Yeshivat Slutsk* began the publication of a Torah magazine called "Yagdil Torah." The editor of the magazine was, of course, Rav Isser Zalman himself, but the bulk of the work was delegated to Rav Moshe Tomashow, a senior student at the Yeshiva and a fine *lamdan*. (He was later to become a well-known Rav in Brooklyn). His

task was essentially to review all the articles submitted and to select those most appropriate for publication. Many of the articles required a good deal of rewriting. Finding the work too taxing, Rav Tomashow sought a younger talmid to assist him. At the suggestion of Rav Isser Zalman he selected young Moshe Aharon, who in addition to *lamdat*, already was known to possess a lucid flow of language in his writing. With each succeeding issue of "Yagdil Torah" Moshe Aharon was given a larger share of the work, so that for several years in *Slutska Yeshiva* circles Rav Poleyeff was acknowledged as its unofficial editor.

After getting *semicha*, Rav Poleyeff, like so many others who received *semicha*, was forced to go into business because of the lack of rabbinical positions in Europe. He

East Side. Rav Poleyeff moved with the Yeshiva to Scammel St. and later to our present site.

During these 46 years, Rav Poleyeff was *koneh shem* not only as a talmid *chakham*, ranking among the greatest of his generation, not only as a brilliant *Rosh Yeshiva* to three generations of talmidim (he was to have several talmidim whose sons and later even grandsons were in his shiur), but also as an *anav* and *ba'al midot* of singular quality.

The chief goal of his shiur was to understand the basic explanation of the *gemara*, *Rashi* and *Tosfof*. In this approach he followed the *derekh* of such greats as K. Akiva Eger, the *T'zlach*, and the *Prnai Yehoshua*. "Too many students will give you a long *pilpul*, starting immediately with a *Rambam*, when they hardly know the *gemara* on which it is based." Thus the basic

Poleyeff the opportunity to hear the comments of others on his ideas. He valued these views, and every *dvar halakha* prepared for publication in his *sefarim* or in Torah periodicals first had to pass the critical comments of his talmidim.

Moed

Another innovation credited by many to Rav Poleyeff was the introduction of the regular study of *gemarot* from *Seder Moed*. American *Yeshivot* patterned themselves after their European counterparts, which rarely emphasized *Seder Moed*. Rav Poleyeff broke with this tradition, and after just a few years began giving shiurim on *Pesachim*, *Succah* and *Betzah*, among others. It was an immediate success, and after he published *chiddushei Torah* on *Moed* the idea caught on, and the inclusion of *Moed* into the cycle of learning has become common practice in most *Yeshivot*.

Anivut

Rav Poleyeff's impact on Yeshiva was a result not only of his vast *lamdat*, but from his exceptional *anivut* and his unbounded love for his students. Talmidim recall with nostalgia the gentleness of his character and the amiable manner with which he guided them. His voice was soft and low, and in order to hear him *it's bochurim* crowded close to his desk. "Divrei *chakhamim* *benashat nishman*" was applied to him regularly. In the 1930s his students showed their love of their rebbi by having a special eight-inch platform constructed from which he would give his shiurim so that he might be better heard. It was and is the only platform at Yeshiva and was taken into whatever room Rav Poleyeff was to give his shiur. It still remains (in room 317 First Hall) a silent reminder of a great rebbi and his talmidim's love.

Perhaps the most memorable sight in the *Bet Midrash* was that of Rav Poleyeff with his arm around a talmid's shoulder listening to his question, explaining some idea or encouraging him to go on to greater learning heights. The talmid need not have been in his shiur — a request for assistance never went unheeded, nor was Rav Poleyeff ever "too busy." It was just another manifestation of his love for the Yeshiva *bochur* and his desire to see him grow in Torah scholarship.

Writings

Rav Poleyeff's fame grew even wider with the publication of his *chiddushei Torah*. Four *sefarim* were published in his lifetime — *Machnei Yisrael*, *B'Air Avraham*, *Orach Mishor* and *Or Hashemesh* — and another in 1970, a three-volume set containing all previously published *chiddushim* and remaining *ktsvei-yad*, given the title *Orach Meishorim*. The style of his shiurim was similar to that of his shiurim: clear, concise, orderly, yet thorough and incisive.

The *sefarim* were at once accepted in the world of Torah. *Rebbeim* and talmidim alike in *Yeshivot* all over the world used

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Rabbi Moshe Poleyeff zt'l

might have remained a businessman and the Torah world would never have been blessed with the fruits of Rav Poleyeff's *gadlut* and *lamdat*, had not world events forced him to make a critical move. In the years following the Russian Revolution of 1917, the Bolsheviks swept the entire country and Jews fled the atheism and terrorism of the Communists by the thousands. Rav Poleyeff and his family were amongst them. Years later Rav Poleyeff would smile as he recalled those days. "The Bolsheviks did not believe in any god, so they poured out their anger first and foremost against religious leaders, both Jewish and non-Jewish, arresting many and sending some to Siberia outright. I was doubly 'blessed.' Not only was I a Rav, but my business made me a capitalist as well! We realized we could not remain a moment longer."

New Era

In the Spring of 1920 Rav Poleyeff left Timkowitz forever, and started for America. Months later, on *Succot* of that year, he arrived on these shores. A new era of unusual success as *Rosh Yeshiva* was about to begin.

Rav Poleyeff came to our Yeshiva three weeks after his arrival in America. It was the start of a record for longevity in one Yeshiva rarely matched among *Roshi Yeshiva* anywhere. For 46 consecutive years with the help of *Hashem*, he was to be *magid shiur*. The Yeshiva was then located on Montgomery Street on the lower

plan employed in his shiur was: first learn the *gemara*, *Rashi* and *Tosfof* well. Then introduce the *meforshim* but only for the purpose of adding to the clarity and understanding of the text. The prime function of the shiur, Rav Poleyeff scrupulously maintained, was to assist the student in the development of his individual ability to analyze and understand a section of the *gemara*.

Derekh

This teaching style, though not unique, was developed by Rav Poleyeff to its ultimate perfection. Students could be recognized as his talmidim from the manner by which they knew and understood the *gemara*. Rav Soloveitchik would often tell Rav Poleyeff that at a *semicha bechina* he could often recognize which students had been in his class by the clarity with which they answered questions on various *gemarot*.

Rav Poleyeff developed what popularly was referred to as the "Thursday shiur." At this shiur, the entire week's *gemara* was reviewed. Then one of the students would present a *dvar halakha* prepared during the week with the assistance of his rebbi. Following this presentation, Rav Poleyeff would review it once again and then offer his own *chiddushim*, inviting comments by his talmidim. This served a dual purpose. Firstly, it made the student think the comments through himself thoroughly and encouraged him to ask questions and perhaps offer an idea of his own. In addition it gave Rav

Halakhic Patient Care

(Continued from Page 5)

famous story of Rav Chanina ben Tradion, who was burned at the stake by the Romans. They had put wet wool over his chest in order to prolong his suffering. His students begged him to open his mouth to let the fire enter and consume him, but he refused, explaining that he is prohibited from harming himself. However, he allowed the executioner to remove the wool in order to hasten his death. This is clearly a terminal case, yet R. Chanina would not condone an active termination of life. However, he did allow for the factor that was inhibiting death, i.e. the "treatment," to be removed in order to let "nature take its course." A similar case is recorded concerning Rebbe, in *Ketubot* (15a).

This is codified in YD (339) with a *gosses*, a terminally ill patient. Any action to precipitate his death is expressly prohibited, even punishment by death. However, it is permissible to remove a factor which is postponing the departure of the *neshama* such as a loud noise, or salt in the patient's tongue. From this we see that in a case where no cure can be affected, and the only prognosis is a prolongation of a life that the

patient finds unacceptable, treatment may be discontinued on his request. By doing this, he is opting to remove artificial non-curative ministrations, and to rely fully on the Healer of all flesh. He may not actively intervene to end his life, but he may refrain from active intervention to prolong it.

At this point we must make a distinction between the above terminal care, and the care of a patient whose condition is stable, though not curable. An example of this is the famous Quinlan case. Here, there are no considerations of pain or imminent death. *Halakha* prohibits the removal of life support, and the condition must be maintained indefinitely. The only possible reason to remove treatment would be due to "triage," i.e. the limited resources of society. The maintenance of this patient may be keeping another with the possibility of cure from receiving treatment, due to a lack of sufficient machinery, etc. In such a case, a decision may be made to remove the hopeless patient from care, in order to administer this treatment to the curable patient. This is only one example of how our *halakha* is seen to be relevant to modern day problems, a fact of which all Jews can be proud.

Reappraising Our Attitudes - A Reply To The Replies

(Continued from Page 7) make such comparisons? Do you not believe that *Eretz Yisrael* has a great significance and an incomparable importance in the Divine plan for our world? *Geulah* is a central belief in Judaism; you cannot dismiss its centrality so glibly, without ignoring blatant references to the *geulah* throughout the Torah. Even you agree that we have now "the best chance at the *geulah* in a millenia," so why allow these chances to be destroyed through such despairing rhetoric and polemics?

Our Orthodox intellectuals speak smoothly of the destruction of millions of Jews. Without realizing the influence of their statements, they write off the (possible) beginning of the *geulah* with impressive arguments. It is obvious that they do not believe the State

has any unique religious significance. Yet the "best chance" for the *geulah* is now. So how can you allow them to infect those who desire and believe in the incipient *geulah* with doubts and despair?

You admit that there is a difference between our present situation and the situation of *Rabban* Yohanan ben Zakkai and even your grandfather. I would say, however, that there is somewhat of a parallel. *Rabban* Yohanan did not plan or seek the destruction of Israel. Need I remind you that his program was based on the concept of *Hilkhita Limshicha*. He was planning for the building of the future regardless of the circumstances of the present (see *Abaranel*). His was not a position of despair but a program of determination and hope. He was planning for the future, not

destroying the present. Let our Orthodox intellectuals do the same. Now that the opportunity is present let them vigorously strengthen the hands of those who uphold Jewish survival. Why are they not as concerned with the decaying situation of the *galut* as they are with the religious insignificance of Israel? Why must they advocate destruction, or plan for it or even think about it? No amount of planning or foresight could have stopped the cataclysmic events of the Holocaust. "*Al tiftach peh lasatan*," let us be careful about what we say.

You question whether gloomy forecasts affect (and whom) our people. This is not a theoretical question, as you state it. We can simply evaluate this question by gauging the emotional climate of our community. It is well apparent that this disheartening talk effects the morale of even the most staunch Zionist. A chilling feeling of *ye'ush* has set in on the communities' spirits. The burdens are onerous and little that our intellectuals are doing lightens it. These gloomy forecasts have had a subtle but significant effect on all segments of the Jewish community. Not only has this talk had noticeable effects on *aliyah* but it has contributed in creating a climate of tension and depression in the pro-state groups in Israel. Need I quote

to you the many shocked reactions I received from staunch Zionists, former Americans who have lived in Israel for years, after the appearance of these articles. Why do you concern yourself with the Conservadox elements, let us worry about our own Orthodox *baalei batim* the majority of whom are influenced by the smallest insinuation of danger to forsake a trip to Israel let alone live there. We can take these fears even one step further. Why should even the most committed Jew make a contribution to a lost cause, an unsound business deal or a declining institution? How can you stand idly by as our Jewish intellectuals continue these predictions of destruction and announcement of defeatism. I urge you to finally read these articles in question. Indeed I am surprised that you chose to evaluate this issue without exposing yourself to the range of issues involved.

We do not talk of any secular state. We talk of a country which we believe is guided by the Divine will. *Atchalta D'geulah* or not, it is directed by the Divine. How can our Orthodox intellectuals seek to subvert the Divine will and plan to abrogate it? How can you apply human finite logic to fathom the great spiritual uniqueness of this land?

I hope our Jewish intellectuals

will come out of their glass houses of philosophical speculation. They should be careful not to throw stones for if they do the world they attack along with their own world will be shattered. Any disaster in Israel will cause serious shock waves in the USA. Even the most well laid plans and the most detailed studies by the greatest experts will not soften the blow or prevent the serious dislocations. On the other hand, anything we do to positively build up Israel will help to avoid such a tragedy in the first place.

Now is not the time to talk. Now is the time to act and bring about a religious revival in world Jewry. We have been hurt by the waves of assimilation and only through a positive and activist approach can the tide be turned and the complete *geulah* come to our people.

To Steve and Yosef:

I, along with many others, am impressed by the devotion and dedication you show to *yishuv ha'aretz*. You are the models which show others that despite the low morale of our community at present, we can hope for a brighter future. I would hope that at least our Orthodox spokesmen will observe your courage and strength and reevaluate their discouraging positions.

Joseph Epstein

Bright Lights

(Continued from Page 12)

generation grew up wearing baseball caps and other millinery to make sure we didn't look too Jewish — to make sure "they" didn't start up with us. Somehow, "they" started up anyway; perhaps our hiding act actually invited trouble, because the greatest encouragement to a bully is his knowledge that you are afraid of him. Nevertheless, that fear we had drove us, and made many otherwise religious people bend over backwards and kowtow to the non-Jewish world. In the process, we almost "Morris Smith'd" our selves to death.

There was always a rationalization for such irrational behavior. "Being a good American" was one of the favorite excuses, and it was thrown at us in the most obscene ways. As if one could not be a good Jew while being a loyal citizen, we were often told to put our national pride before religious pride. This theological sellout in favor of Uncle Sam reached even the very institutions entrusted with the job of teaching us Torah. To be a "good American" meant you had to remove your *kippah* during school assemblies when the Star-Spangled Banner was played. This ridiculous rule was actually enforced by the teachers who would return to their *Chumash* and Talmud lessons after the assembly was over. It was a sad sight when one or two frightened sixth-graders would find themselves fighting an entire school administration just for the right to keep their *yarmulkas* on place.

Thank G-d we're coming out of that unfortunate era. The schools in question no longer have such rules. Morris Smith is changing his name to an Hebraicized version, and contemplating *Aliyah*. Knitted *kippot* are replacing the baseball caps. Thanks to many different factors, including the Six Day War, the JDL and the campus revolution, pride is replacing embarrassment, resolution is displacing shame. By and large, the religious Jew is becoming an activist, shouting his faith to the world, and bringing it out into the open, with his *mitzvah* tanks, his Soviet Jewry rallies, his COLPA ... and his *menorah* on Am-

sterdam Avenue.

There is still a good deal to be done. With our current world-wide problems facing us, it is still very hard to be a Jew. Apparently it will be a while before every single Jew holds his head up high. But a healthy beginning has been made. The light of those *menorot* is enhanced and magnified by all the travails that preceded it. Let's protect that beautiful glow, and increase its brilliance in the future.

(Continued from Page 7)

entity which is Israel." The cardinal elements of Israel are the people, the land, and the Torah. The interaction of these forces lends form to the uniqueness of our religious *weltanschauung* and national destiny.

This understanding is not exclusively an abstract one. In fact, it is our duty to think of *Eretz Yisrael* as a reality. *Chassidim* tell that once *Rav* Nachman of Breslev gave a fiery talk in which he spoke about the war which each Jew must wage and win with regard to *Eretz Yisrael*, after which a disciple asked him if he was thinking of a spiritual "*Eretz Yisrael*." *Rav* Nachman answered, "No, I mean the real place, with its houses and streets, as we see it with the human eye." *Eretz Yisrael* is not only the place to which the Messiah will come. It is in *Aretz* that the process of redemption evolves, blossoms and develops.

And this leads us to a second point: Living in *Eretz Yisrael* is of paramount importance. *Chazal* say in a number of places that it is of equal value with all the other commandments. *Nachmanides* explains that it is a *mitzvah assei midorayta* to live in the land at all times. (*Hasagot I sepher hamitzvot laRambam*, no. 4 and on Numbers 33:53 cc.; *Kafzor V'perach*, 10; *Chatam Sofer Yoreh Deah*, 234).

But more than that, many *mitzvot* cannot be fulfilled in *Galut*; over two-thirds of the *Taryag mitzvot* depend on *Eretz Yisrael*. Furthermore, it could be that the *mitzvot* we observe in exile are only "reminders," lest we forget the Torah when we come back to *Aretz*. (*Sifre*, Deut. 11.18,

and *Rashi*, *Ramban ad loc.*) "There is no greater *bitul-Torah* than that of departing from *Eretz Yisrael*" (*Chagiga* 5).

The question is why we, religious Jews, fail in this task. Our own generation has witnessed a chain of events with an unmistakably miraculous element. Unfortunately, there is a lack of response. It is as if G-d has opened His heavenly abode to reveal himself to His people, and they refuse to look up. They refuse to use the establishment of *M'dinat Yisrael* as the fulfillment of G-d's promise.

What is most astonishing and painful is that this denial of Israel's rebirth as a sign from Above is not confined to the non-religious. In the religious sectors, too, there are non-believers. They do not see the "hand of G-d" in contemporary happenings. They are, *Rachmana litzlan*, so far removed from the notion of authentic redemption, that they are blind to discern the coming of the Messiah. Why is it that we do not realize that the *Geulah* will take place with or without our participation? Of course, our involvement can hasten the process. If we would only try hard enough and transplant all the religious communities, *shuls* and schools, from America to Israel, we might be able "to do the trick"

ourselves. Anyway, if we would accomplish this, we would constitute a majority in *Aretz*, and surely our Messianic predicament would be self-evident! (*Megillah* 14a)

One of the early forerunners of Religious Zionism and whom *Rav* Akiva Eiger considered one of his favorite *talmidim*, *Rav* Zvi Kalisher (z.t.l.) wrote: "Let none think that G-d will suddenly descend from heaven and order us to leave the Diaspora. Israel's redemption will be realized in stages. As we proceed to deliver our land in the terrestrial sphere, so will G-d repay us by grace from heaven."

Our generation has been privileged to see Divine assistance in the acquisition of political independence and military prowess. But do we deserve *Geulah*? Do our actions point that we merit and are worthy of the Ultimate Salvation?

We, religious Jews, must be ready for *Geulah*! We must be prepared to look upon the State of Israel as the awaited *Mamlechet Kohanim V'Goy Kadosh*.

For the time being, we cannot realistically expect more than a secular democracy in Israel. In a sense, we should welcome these democratic freedoms as the best environment for that which is our primary task and responsibility —

Israel And The Redemption

the winning over by persuasion and exemplification in the spirit of "voluntarism" and free intellectual inquiry, Israeli Jewry to the truths of Torah.

Here lies the challenge for Yeshiva University and Modern Orthodoxy:

Yehuda Halevi explains that the basic character of our creed is based upon "our historic experience." The apprehension of faith in certain central events of group-experience is what launches the religious destiny of our people!

Are we capable of demonstrating our effectiveness? We are the medium that should know how to interpret the various historical events. We are those who should be commissioned by faith to meet the challenges of the time!

The *Rav*, J.B. Soloveitchik (*shlita*), remarked last year in a *shiur* that "observance (of a *mitzvah*), *ipso facto*, creates *kedusha*." Let us look forward! And may our sight not be blocked, so that we may sense the intrinsic and evolving *kedusha* radiating forth from Israel.

This understanding I believe is vital for a proper approach to the totality of Judaism. It must become the guiding spirit for the Jew, here and in *Aretz*.

Thank you, Joey! You raised the problem. Now let us concentrate on solving it. For, as you correctly say, "Let us not doubt the resurgence of the Jewish spirit ... which will continue forever." We believe in *M'dinat Yisrael*; there is no other option.

Bvirchat Zion
V'Yerushalayim,
Joseph Chaim Klausner

The editor-in-chief and governing board of HAMEVASER extend a hearty *Mazel Tov* to Research Editor Martin Thaler upon his engagement to Marcia Rothstein.

The editor-in-chief and governing board of HAMEVASER extend a hearty *Mazel Tov* to Technical Editor Michael Hershkovics on his engagement to Ingrid Pasternak.

The NCSY Movement: Means To An End

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persuing the goals of NCSY. After seven long years, Rabbi Wasserman had visited every major American city. Endless nights and days were spent traveling, talking and learning with irreligious youth who never experienced orthodox Judaism. Rabbi Wasserman is endowed with the charisma, *l'havdil*, of a John Lindsay and the wisdom of a *talmid chacham*. By the time Rabbi Wasserman had finished this work, N.C.S.Y. had reached out to almost the entire country. Young Jews who had not known the meaning of any of the *mitzvos* were turned on to Yiddishkeit. The country was divided into regions; each region broken down into chapters supervised by advisors. Devoted men such as Rabbi Louis Ginsburg and Cantor Aaron Lieber were all instrumental in the making of the new youth movement.

Current Ideas

By 1970 NCSY had become financially independent. Funds were no longer allocated from the UOJCA. The main sources of income were synagogue support and private contributions. Rabbi Baruch Taub, who rose from the position of Southern Regional Director, to Associate National Director, helped raise NCSY's stature. Rabbi Taub epitomizes the word dedication, giving much of his time to the organization and, he is presently NCSY's National Director. In its recent ascent under Rabbis Taub and Stolper, another notable figure emerged from the ranks.

Baruch Lanner spent eight years as a student of Rav Yoseph Dov Soloveitchek and went on to get his *semicha*. NCSY had been primarily an organization which helped *non-frum* youth. Baruch, however, had his own ideas. As a freshman math teacher in MTA, he saw the op-

portunity to bring together all types of young people. Baruch noticed that the typical yeshiva high school student did not care about his religiously, and at the same time, he saw a boy with a weaker religious background envious of the yeshiva student. It was obvious the two types had to be combined. To quote Rabbi Lanner, "There's no greater thrill than for a *talmid* to become a *rebbe*." While the yeshiva student gets a boost of enthusiasm and sensitivity from his *non-frum* peer, the latter receives knowledge and kinship. Among the many other programs instituted by NCSY are the printing and distribution of religious paraphernalia, and the *Halakha-Hotline*. Two *Yeshivot*, *Or Sameach* for boys and *N'veh Yerushalayim*, have been founded in Israel. In Brooklyn, NCSY has a special region called "Our Way." It is a unique religious school that specializes in teaching deaf children. In Washington Heights, a similar program exists, which organizes *shabbatonim* for handicapped children. (Incidentally, such a *shabbat* program will take place at Yeshiva this coming February.) All in all, NCSY has become an organization which represents over five hundred chapters, and well over fifteen thousand registered members. It is the only Jewish youth movement which has shown a steady increase in size over the past five years. These statistics include B'nai Brith and USY.

Main Goal

What actually happens at an NCSY event? It can be summed up in two words: *Torah V'Truach* (and not necessarily in that order). The Torah might be just the *aleph bet* or it might be a question of the *Bet Yoseph* on the *Tur*. If anyone (including the youngest members)

has a *halakic* problem he will surely get an answer, whether from a member of the immediate staff or from such *g'dolim* as Rav Soloveitchik, Rav Moshe Feinstein, or Rav Hutner.

At present, NCSY's main goal is to put Jewish youth on the threshold of a yeshiva. The approach is motivation and en-

Between Rebbe & Student

(Continued from Page 5)

from these teachings is that a Rav is a man who has mastered the Torah, is capable of serving the Jewish community and is obligated to teach students Torah. Teaching a student is not enough, the Rav must also build a personal relationship with his students. There are three important areas in this relationship that a Rav should know. They are:

a. how the Rav should view his students;

b. certain sensitivities which the sages of the Talmud exhibited towards their students, and

c. teaching methods and suggestions for the Rav to improve the learning in his class.

Sculptor

The *M'chilta's* interpretation of the verse "choose for us men" is that (a Rav's) students should be as dear to him as himself. When a Rav prays, he prays in the merit of his students, "Answer me, G-d answer me, in the merit of my students."¹ He also prays that "oh that you would bless me with Torah and enlarge my borders with students."² The Rav has the ability to shape another person's entire personality and character. Anyone who teaches his friend's child Torah, the Scriptures attributes to him as if he gave birth to the child,³ and as the child's Rav-father he can mold his personality. Not only is the student needed by the Rav, but the Rav also needs the student, as it says, "such as have no changes" (Psalms 55:20) refers to a person who leaves no students behind.⁴ But in order to leave students behind a Rav must attract students. To do this, he must have respect for his students. "Let the honor of your students be as clear to you as your own."⁵

The *Rambam* tells us that it is essential for a man to care for his students and to love them for they are the sons who make life enjoyable both in this world and the world to come.⁶ He should realize that his students increase his wisdom and broaden his heart.⁷ As *Rav Chanina* said, "much wisdom have I learned from my teachers, from my colleagues more than from my teachers, but from my students more than them all."⁸ As a father figure, he should realize that not all his children-students are of equal status. If he is a worthy student let thy springs be dispersed abroad (tell him the secrets of the Torah) but if not let them be thine own.⁹

Relating

The Rav is not merely a teacher, but a human being as well, a person to whom the student may come to with personal as well as academic problems. When the student approaches him he must not be overly harsh for whoever sets fuming and,

thusiasm for Torah. NCSY is only a means to an end, not an end unto itself. *T'shuva*, explains the *Ramban*, is the process of one's thoughts, giving him the ability to pass a *Masseh Nisayon*, if one does indeed pass this test, it is only because of acts of tremendous heroism. While NCSY does create a natural link between non-orthodox and yeshiva youth, it is up to the

yeshiva, as well as the individual, to fulfill that link.

My last question to Baruch was, "How do you make someone frum? What's the trick?" "There's no trick. First you say, 'Hello'. Then you develop a personal relationship. And perhaps most importantly, don't be *m'karev* the kid *l'shem mitzvah*; be *m'karev* the kid for himself."

severe eyes upon pupils in this world his canopy will be filled with smoke in the world to come.¹⁰ He should be kind and concerned. It once happened that a student of Rav Akiva was sick and no scholar came to visit him and then Rav Akiva entered to visit him.¹¹ He should recognize the individual personalities of his students. (Our Rabbis taught that when you drink water you should pour some out before giving it to your student. It happened once that a man drank some water and without pouring any out gave (the cup) to his student. The student was a delicate person and did not want to drink and he died of thirst.¹² Imagine, a student died because of the neglect of his Rav.)

Once *Nechamiah* son of *Rav Chanelya* was absorbed in study and walked beyond the *Shabbat* limit. "Your student *Nechamiah*," said *Rav Chisda* to *Rav Nachman*, "is in distress." "Draw up for him," the other replied, "a wall of human beings and let him reenter."¹³ *Rav Yochanan ben Zakai* was acutely aware of his students' personalities and always opened the door for his students, as *Rashi* explains because there was jealousy and *bitul Torah* among his students when it came to who should open the door for the incoming chaverim.¹⁴

"Shiur"

Without a doubt the sensitivities that a Rav should show must manifest themselves when he gives a *shiur*. Even *Rabab*, before he commenced his discourse before the scholars, used to say something humorous and the scholars were cheered. After that he sat in awe and began the discourse.¹⁵

Our Rabbis give us many additional hints and suggestions as to the way the *shiur* should be given. Instruction is given with the Rav sitting in the front and the students surrounding him like a crown so that all can see the Rav and hear his words. The Rav does not sit on a chair if the students are on the floor or vice versa. They are either all on chairs or all on the floor.¹⁶

If the Rav taught and the students did not understand, he should not get angry at them and become moody, but rather he should repeat and teach them the matter many times, and if one's Rav gets angry at him, he should say to his Rav, it is Torah and I need instructions, but my mind is short of understanding.¹⁷

A Rav should always teach his students in concise terms¹⁸ and he should teach out of love and in the end the honor will come.¹⁹ In addition, when choosing a tractate, a Rav should keep in mind that a man can learn well only that part of

the Torah which he desires (for which he has an aptitude or to which his mood is attuned — Soncino footnote). *Rashi* adds that his teacher should only teach him a tractate that he desires from him because if he teaches him another it will not take root because his (the student's) mind is on that which he desired.

Responsibility

What will happen to a Rav who does not exhibit any understanding or concern towards his students? If you see a student who finds his studies as hard as iron, it is because his teacher did not encourage him and did not show him cheerful countenance.²⁰ If the students are unable to learn then there is no tradition to be carried on; "if there are no students there are no sages." Thus the Rav holds within his hands the future of the Jewish people. A careless and thoughtless move on his part may cause untold damage to the continuance of the Jewish way of life.

Even in the most trying of situations, students have shown an inordinate amount of respect and honor to their Rav. But this respect is not a one way street. Countless scholars have been lost due to the callous attitudes of their *Rebbeim* at every stage of their Jewish education. While there were *Rebbeim* who cared, there were many more who gave no indication that they understood or cared about their student's problems. Judaism is supposed to set the examples of love, honor and respect to the outside world and it is the Rav who must set these examples to his students.

NOTES

- ¹ *Rambam* *Yad-Chazakah*, *Talmud-Torah* 1:2.
- ² *Ibid* 3:6
- ³ *Ibid* 3:7
- ⁴ *Pirkei Avot* 1:17
- ⁵ *Ta'anit* 10b
- ⁶ *Rambam* *Yad Chazakah*, *Dayot* 5:9
- ⁷ *Bechorot* 19a
- ⁸ *Eruvin* 63a
- ⁹ *Moad Katan* 17a
- ¹⁰ *Baba M'tzia* 33a
- ¹¹ *Avot D'Rav Natan* 8
- ¹² *Baba M'tzia* 33a
- ¹³ *Yerushalmi*, *Baba M'tzia* 2:11
- ¹⁴ *M'chilta* B'Shalukh 17
- ¹⁵ *Yerushalmi*, *Ta'anit* 20:8
- ¹⁶ *T'mura* 16a
- ¹⁷ *Sanhedrin* 19b
- ¹⁸ *Pirkei Avot* 4:15
- ¹⁹ *Rambam* op cit 5:12
- ²⁰ *Ibid* 5:13
- ²¹ *Ta'anit* 7a
- ²² *Ta'anit* 7a
- ²³ *Bamidbar* *Rababah* 21, 22
- ²⁴ *N'darim* 46a
- ²⁵ *Tamid* 27b
- ²⁶ *Eruvin* 43b
- ²⁷ *Succah* 28a
- ²⁸ *Shabbat* 30b
- ²⁹ *Rambam* op cit 4, 2
- ³⁰ *Ibid* 4:4
- ³¹ *P'sachim* 3b
- ³² *N'darim* 62b
- ³³ *Ta'anit* 8a

Portrait of a Rebbe

(Continued from Page 8)

sefarim in their *shiurim* and in their personal learning. Letters of praise poured in from *gedolim* all over the world. *Rav Shlomo Zevin*, *shlita*, writing in his *sefer "Sefarim veSofrim"*, offered unique praise in commenting on the second *sefer*. Since all this Torah was created in a Yeshiva on American shores, he wrote, it demonstrated that "American Torah" is the equal of "European Torah," and that the prevailing attitude (in the '30s and '40s) that American *Yeshivot* and *gedolim* were somehow inferior in their learning and teaching was incorrect.

Rav Poleyeff's love for his students; his confidence in his ability; his patience in imparting his knowledge to them; all this combined to make him one of the premier *Roshei Yeshiva* of the past generation. Yeshiva was fortunate to be the immediate beneficiary of his extraordinary abilities for so many years. In conferring an honorary degree upon *Rav Poleyeff* after his completing 40 years as *Rosh Yeshiva*, Dr. Samuel Belkin

z'l declared: "Above all, we respect him for his humility, his moral integrity, and for his dedication of his life and energy to the study and teaching of our sacred tradition without regard to honor and glory."

No wonder that thousands whose lives have been influenced by *Rav Poleyeff* still proudly refer to him as their "rebbe *muvhak*," or much more affectionately, "my rebbe." On 2 *Kislev* 5727 his soul was recalled to the *Yeshiva shel maaloh*. *Lampport Auditorium* was filled to overflowing with over two thousand mourners who came to say farewell to their beloved *rebbe* and friend, and hear *Rav Eliyahu Henkin z'l* come out of a sick bed and, in a voice hardly audible above a whisper, deliver a moving *hesped* of "his beloved and lifelong friend of over sixty-five years."

His mortal body was brought to its eternal rest on *Har Hamenucho* outside *Yerushalayim*. Only fifteen feet away is the *kever* of his distinguished rebbe, *Rav Isser Zaiman Meltzer*, together again in death as they were in life.

Understanding The Mystery Of The Menorah

(Continued from Page 4)
for each of us, an overriding concern, each person must light the menorah himself. In addition, not only must each person light his own menorah expressing his own religiosity, but the menorah must be lit in its place. It is not possible to light the menorah in one place and then move it to another. The menorah must be lit in every situation — no matter whom or where a person is. He cannot rely on other people — the Rabbi or anyone else — or on his own past experience in yeshiva to fulfill his religiosity! Everyone must light his own menorah wherever he happens to be, but it must always be lit in a place where it can be seen. A hidden observance is insufficient. Our Yiddishkeit must be made public.

Fundamentals

If our interpretation of the Chanukah light is correct, the desire for *Hidur mitzvah* is no longer seen as an extravagant luxury but is very much in place now. When one is dealing with fundamentals of belief, nothing less than the best should suffice.

Such an approach also helps us to understand the lack of stress on the historical aspect of the *yom tov*. While we usually stress the historical aspect of the *chag* such an approach on Chanukah would be out of place because it would suggest that only in a time of historical need is it necessary to be thankful to and cognizant of *Hashem*. Similarly, we can appreciate why *chazal* waited until the following year to establish the holiday. To institute the *chag* immediately would have merely responded to a temporal need, but the following year with the enemy vanquished and the need long forgotten, the establishment of the *yom tov* at such a time would be an indication that the light of Torah was not merely something necessary in times of special need but something necessary all the time.

Obscure Miracles

In view of the preceding, we can shed some new light on the *Beit Yosef's* famous question as to why Chanukah is eight days rather than seven, since the *nes* was only seven days. We now see that this is the whole point of the *chag*. The immediate need for *Hashem* was only seven days. The *chag* is eight in order to remind us that religion is not something necessary only in times of need for special occasions as the Hellenizers claimed, but always. Many commentaries deal with the numbers seven and eight pointing out that seven is a manifestation of G-d in the natural world (e.g. *Shabbos*), while eight is going one step beyond nature which is adding to and completing G-d's work. It is interesting to note that the element which allows us to live above nature, the factor which changes Chanukah from seven days to eight, is our ability to see and celebrate G-d's presence not only when there is a tremendous need, but in simple daily occurrences as well. Perhaps this is precisely the reason that *pirsumei nisah* is required. There were greater miracles during our redemption from Egypt, but since those miracles were obvious, there was

no need to publicize them. A miracle such as this one (and Purim as well) was a natural miracle and this is when *pirsumei nisah* is required.

But this feeling of awareness of G-d everyday is hard to retain. Nature is nothing more than a miracle plus time. The longer we are exposed to the kindnesses of *Hashem*, the more oblivious we become to them. Human nature slowly causes us to take things for granted. Its effect on us is *pochet v'holekh* (continually decreasing). To counter this tendency, *chazal* demanded us to be *mosif v'holekh* (to increase). If we want to retain our commitment to and feeling for Yiddishkeit, we cannot just continue to light the same number of candles, but we have to constantly grow and expand our efforts in Torah, to prevent the decreasing tendency from taking effect. Status quo is impossible. If a person is not growing in Torah, his observance and commitment will be lessened.

This explains why the form of the *mitzvah* was one of increase, even though the flame in the Temple remained constant. If we live by a philosophy of *mosif v'holekh*, it is possible to find the miracle even in nature. If we do not, it is inevitable that we will turn the greatest miracle into nature.

This concept of *mosif v'holekh*, however, is not only to be directed to ourselves. It is no coincidence that the Hebrew for education, *chinukh*, and Chanukah comes from the same root, because true dedication of self and personal fulfillment is only possible through Chanukah. Many claim that the answer to an energy crisis or a fuel shortage is to cut consumption. Jewish history tells us differently. A Jewish energy crisis was never met by conservation but by *pirsumei nisah*, showing who we are and hopefully lighting the fire to make more Jewish power. If it seems like a formidable task, *chazal* also tell us that even a little

light illuminates the darkness. In Rav Kook's words, the pitcher of oil in the soul of each Jew is and will always be pure and merely must be lit. We should not be afraid that we will not succeed, because the lighting itself is the *mitzvah*. Once lit, the soul will remain aglow. Perhaps this seems unrealistic. Perhaps it is equally unrealistic to expect our commitment to increase when this is not the way of the world. But it is no more unrealistic than was the Hashmonean's battle. It is no more miraculous, than to light a menorah when there was not enough oil to sustain the flame. "Many in the hands of a few" is also unrealistic and yet happened. But the victory occurred only after they had the faith to light the menorah. Chanukah reminds us that miracles only occur for people who believe that they will occur, and who act on that belief. They only happen for people who expect them because they know that all of

life, be it natural or not, is really miraculous anyway.

Chanukah usually occurs during the week of *parshat Miketz*, which talks about dreams. Rav Zevin points out that the difference between dreams and reality is light. Dreams occur at night in the dark. Reality is symbolized by daylight. Perhaps this is to remind us that if we ever hope to see the dreams of today become the reality of tomorrow it is not enough just to dream. Only by adding light, by being *mosif v'holekh* both in our own commitment and that of others as well, by reorganizing our lives around the light of Torah which must ultimately be its base, can we hope to see the realization of our dreams.

This then is the message of the menorah. Far from being a "useless" symbolic observance, it can indeed be enlightening if, when we light the menorah, we "see the light" and kindle not only the candles but our hearts as well.

The Evil Eye: A Benign Examination

by Lyle Kamlet

In Sicily and Southern Italy the power of the "mal-occhio" is considered a formidable threat; in Spain the "mal-de-ojo" is shunned; in Southern France the "mauvais oeil" is the object of dread; and, in Germany, "der böse Blick" is feared by many, particularly the peasants.

This cryptic force is known as the Evil Eye, or, as it is euphemistically termed in Yiddish, the *git-oyz*: the good eye. No other superstition has been so revered by the occult, has had origins so shrouded in mystery, or has been the universal recipient of such unexampled infamy, as has the belief in the malevolent power of the *ayin hara*, the Evil Eye.

According to Tannaitic sources (see *Samuel*, 18:9; *Proverbs*, 23:6, 28:22; also, *Avot*, 2:14, 5:22), one who had an evil eye was considered stingy, selfish and jealous. This was in marked contrast to a "good-eyed" person who was kind-hearted and generous. These sources, then, evoke no mystical connotation to the Evil Eye as we know it.

Categories

The Evil Eye, as it is referred to today, is clearly a misnomer. Of the two types of supernatural phenomena it comprehends, only the first should be so denoted.

This first type affirms that selected people have eyes that can produce baleful effects. The unfortunate candidates, born *jetatori*, may be divided into two categories. Some may be recognized by the peculiar cast of their eyes which shed destructive rays with every glance; others, however, may be totally unaware of their baneful endowment until the full consequences are wrought.

This type of Evil Eye was believed to contain the element of fire; hence, it could spread destruction (the "Maharah" of Prague, *Netivot Olam*, 107 d). Killing by transformation was a well-known effect of the Eye enacted by several rabbis in the *Talmud* (see *Shabbat* 34a where it is related how R. Simeon b. Yohai

transformed an evil person into "a heap of bones." See also *Berachot* 58a et passim).

Many Biblical personalities, moreover, were believed to have exercised the magical power of the Eye. Sarah cast an Evil Eye upon her maidservant, *Hagar*, causing *Hagar* to miscarry. With her evil glance, Sarah was also able to make her stepson, *Ishmael*, sick and feverish (*Genesis*, 16:6, 16:12). Og punished Og the giant for having looked with evil eyes upon Jacob and his family when they arrived in Egypt, with



A Persian Amulet used to ward off the evil eye

the following decree: "O thou wicked knave, why dost thou look upon them with an evil eye? Verily, thine eye shall burst, for thou shalt fall into their hands" (*Ibid.*, III, 345). David utilized the Eye for beneficial purposes, casting it upon his opponent, Goliath; this sufficed to afflict Goliath with leprosy (*Ibid.*, IV, 87).

The second aspect of the Evil Eye, a product of Palestinian sources, predominated Jewish thought. It stresses that the Eye is activated by arousing the jealousy and malice of the *jetatori*. This called into being an evil angel who took vengeance on the one who aroused him *Manasseh* Ben Israel, *Nishmat Hayyim*, 3:26). Thus, according to one opinion in the *Talmud*, Daniel's three friends died immediately upon being saved from the fiery furnace; their death was caused by the Evil Eye with which people looked at them because of the miracle wrought for them (*Sanhedrin* 93a). The great ceremony on the occasion of

presenting the first tablets at Mount Sinai had the dire effect of directing the Evil Eye towards them so that they were finally broken (*Genesis*, III, 140). God broke the spell of the Evil Eye at the time of the consecration of the sanctuary in the wilderness, so that the festive ceremonies of that great event not incur the wrath or jealousy of the nations towards Israel (*Ibid.*, III, 186).

There were certain unquestioned means, however, of successfully annulling the trenchant mark of demonic animus.

Among the manifold preventive and counteractive controls deemed efficacious against demoniacal malignity, the wearing of amulets, inscribed with special "Words of Power" (frequently combinations of the written names of God), was considered to be the most striking, and, in many ways, the most popular. Their magical powers were considered to be so potent, in fact, that special amulets were even permitted to be worn outside on the Sabbath; at times they were placed upon animals, as well, to ward off the Eye (see *Orach Chaim* 303:15; 305:11. See also *Rashi, Shabbat* 57b s. "chumra"). In time, though, the ornamented letters inscribed on the amulets, faded by age, have become almost impossible to decipher.

The best preventive means against inciting the Evil Eye was the avoidance of unnecessary exposure to those things that were likely to attract special attention to themselves. Indeed, the *Talmud* remarks that a blessing is to be found only in those things that are hidden from the eye (*Taanit* 8 b). Thus, Abraham sent his son Isaac home at night after the ordeal of the *Akedah* offering (*Genesis Rabbah* 56:20); Jacob advised his strong and handsome sons not to enter the same gate together in Egypt "on account of the Eye" (*Ibid.*, 91:2); Joshua advised *Ephraim* and *Manasseh* to hide in a forest (*Baba Batra* 1:8a). Similarly, a costly garment should not be spread over the bed when

guests are visiting the house, for "it will be burned by the eye of the guests" (*Baba Metzia* 30a) and one should not admire the growth of the produce in his friend's field (see *Rashi, ibid.*, 107 a, *Baba Batra* 2b s.v. "assur").

It is customary for members of the same family to avoid being called up in tandem to recite the blessings over the *Torah* for fear of inciting the Eye. (This applies, however, only when they are called up by name — see *Sh'arim Metzuyanim ba'Halakha* I, 23:10.) So too, Jews would refrain from the performance of a double wedding in one household (see *Taz, Yoreh Deah*, 265:11) and from the marriage of two brothers to two sisters (see *Azulay's* commentary on *Sefer Hasidim*, no. 477).

Other practices considered de rigueur in neutralizing the effects of the Evil Eye were the recitation of prophylactic phrases, such as "May the Lord protect thee" and "K'ein Ayin-hara" (with no Evil Eye). Others included the pronouncement of the *aggadic* sentence that the descendants of Joseph are immune from the Eye (*Berachot* 20a et passim, Joseph's descendants did not die prematurely from the Evil Eye as most of the other tribes did. See commentary of *Maharsha* to *Baba Metzia* 47a and 107b). Also, gestures such as the "fig" and "Horns of Bael" (the latter produced by making a fist with the index and little finger stretched out; see *Berachot* 55b) were used.

Finally, Jews were urged never to take a census (see *Rashi, Exodus* 30:12), estimate the possession of wealth, or express approbation in highly flattering terms (see *Rashi Sukka* 53 a s.v. "arei" and on Numbers 12:1; "A man will call his handsome son 'Ethiopian' to avoid casting the Evil Eye upon him").

The concept of the Evil Eye was, perhaps, best epitomized four centuries ago by the French wit, La Rochefoucauld, who stated: "We promise according to our hopes, and perform according to our fears."

Contributing Editor

YU WOMAN OF THE YEAR

Joseph Epstein



This story needs to be told and its words need to be remembered. It is a story of a devoted person, a tireless worker and a kind soul. It is a sketch of an unusual YU teacher who rarely enters a classroom and never gives a test but has thousands of students who have learned much from her. She is perhaps the oldest YU teacher still teaching, but she has no problem keeping ahead of the quickest of her students.

There, in the first floor recesses of the high school dorm (nowadays called the Strenger Dormitory), lives a little old lady (as she calls herself). Officially she is the high school dorm mother responsible for the overall welfare of the high school dorm students. Her name is Mrs. Fannie Weitzendorf (Mrs. W. as her students call her). For over *chai* (18) years she has practiced her profession of *ahavat yisrael*.

You've seen her around in the cafeteria at lunch time picking up her groceries or roving through the halls on her way to a meeting. Several times during her journeys she'll stop to say hello, send regards or show concern for her friends' welfare. And then stopping one of her old time students, she'll say in her Austrian "drawl": "Dawling, vy don't you come to my apartment for a cookie." So you'll follow this little old lady with the golden hair to her small and simple apartment and you'll eat a cookie, drink some orange juice or tea, perhaps grab a look at the *Times* and "schmooz" with Mrs. W about the goings on around town.

A biographical sketch of this friendly woman (she and her husband z"l fled Austria before the

Hitler ys"v Holocaust) would not tell the whole story. Mrs. W claims no masterful writings nor has she composed eloquent and scholarly speeches. She does not do the things which get written up in PR bulletins. She operates in the realm of the emotions and the spirit and her actions are actions of *chesed*. Her accomplishments cannot be

minor cuts and bruises. Daily, she must patiently respond to the emotional needs of her students, listening to the *tzarot* and concerns of all who seek her company. On *Shabbat*, she invites three or four of her boys to a meal and, to top it all off, she prepares a *chulent* for 40-60 of her boys on *Shabbat* morning.

establishment of the YU outdoor basketball courts — all donated to YU in her honor. At times she will actually raise funds for YU and arrange for a donation in order to benefit her boys and her school.

We speak of someone who succeeds where others fail, of a person who becomes stronger as others tire and retire. We speak of someone who works as many hours a day as students study. This is a commendable job for any young person. In this case, it is being done by a woman in her 80's, *ken yirbu*, who is strong, healthy and alert.

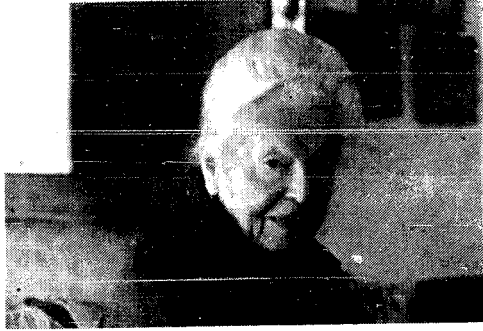
One can only admire a little old lady such as she. With a lively spirit and with deep sensitivity, she relates to students many years her junior. Tens of people pass through her apartment every day. Many ask for her help, many seek rest for their bodies and souls, but all come in search of her warmth and sensitivity. With each she maintains a unique relationship. Such encounters can tax the energies of the strongest person, but Mrs. W thrives on helping others.

The calm and dignified atmosphere of her apartment matches her personality. She puts you at ease and her boys can experience a moment of rest in the midst of the pressures of student life. Over a hot cup of tea (special

cinnamon tea which only she knows how to correctly make), Mrs. W will tell a story to fit any situation. She remembers the forgotten past and links you to the unknown world of yesterday. She will talk about her life in Vienna or about her parents. She'll speak of her years in the USA and about the generations of her students, about their successes and happiness which she shares. With great respect she'll speak of her friendship with Rav Moshe Feinstein and Rabbi Samuel Belkin z"l. She'll try to calm the situation, teach *chesed* through her words and even more so through her actions.

There are others like Mrs. Weitzendorf who dedicate themselves to their work at YU. Their devotion to the students knows no bounds and their work is done quietly, often unacknowledged. It is people like these who soften the pressurized YU environment. It is to their credit that their students succeed as they do.

The generations of the students of Mrs. Weitzendorf owe her a debt of gratitude. May Mrs. Weitzendorf be granted many more years of health and strength to continue to perform her labor of love as the mother of hundreds and the teacher of *chesed* and *tzedakah*.



Mrs. Fannie Weitzendorf

measured by awards. When all the newspaper clippings are yellowed and forgotten and the awards tarnished and ignored, Mrs. W's accomplishments will survive in the hearts of those she has touched and in the minds of those who have appreciated her kindness and devotion.

Her dedication to "her boys" (as she calls her students) knows no limits. Years ago, she would get up at 4 A.M. to turn on the heat in the dorm on cold mornings. Nowadays, she continues to help the many students who suffer from ills ranging from major diseases to

Quietly, she will arrange for things which benefit many. Unfortunately, her activities often go unacknowledged by those who should recognize and be thankful for her devotion. She has arranged for new furniture for the dorm, a paint job, fixing of the floors,

Randomly Distributed Words

by Moshe Koppel

It is both an historical fact and a logical necessity that the Jewish tradition is one of commitment and not of belief. Historically, so-called "Jewish philosophy" has generally reflected the spirit of the times and the only common element among the various traditions which have retained their Jewish identity is a commitment to *mitzvot*.

Of greater interest to us, however, is a) our inability to wade through the muck and mire of a philosophy which abounds with undefined terms, and b) the impossibility of choosing to believe the unprovable. Our basic premise is that reality is a product of the mind and hence, that meaningful ideas must be reducible to certain atomic, intuitive perceptions or feelings. Fear is "well-defined" in so far as one experiences it, chairs can be seen or felt, thoughts are experienced.

Debating the existence of G-d, for example, is great fun for adolescents and clergymen, but is inappropriate for people who care to know what they are talking about. It is comforting to proclaim belief in G-d, to long for the world to come, to sing mindless paens to the powers of *zugot*. Unfortunately, however, all of these words have long ago been "abstracted" right out of existence. If we speak of G-d's "existence" as being completely incomprehensible in cognitive terms, then what, pray tell, is the distinction between the affirmation and negation of G-d's existence? This very basic question has long troubled just about everybody

other than theologians whose livelihoods depend on their ignoring such questions and engaging in lengthy semantic quibbles instead. (Ever hear the one about the rock so heavy . . .?)

It seems imperative that some attempt be made to identify these terms with meaningful concepts. Before we face this challenge we must regress a bit and describe the basic machinery of science. We observe events, record these events and discern patterns among them. The fundamental assumption of science is that these events occur according to fixed rules. If we speculate that whenever X occurs, Y occurs, then we call X "the cause of Y." (Beware. Whenever we see our face punched we feel pain, ergo a punch in the face causes pain. However, gravity is not perceived independently of an object falling, ergo gravity does not cause objects to fall, gravity is the fact that objects fall.) From this it is clear

that it will not do to define our terms as causes or consequences (whatever became of Bob Barker?) insofar as something is a cause or consequence only if its existence is independently defined.

With this in mind we'd do well to take a few cracks at solving our problem. Could we think of G-d as being the very uniformity in nature which science assumes — with the understanding that what we perceive as miracles can also be incorporated into rules (sloppy ones) and that thoughts (*mitzvot*) can effect physical phenomena (psychosomatic illness, parapsychology, etc.). We could think of G-d as causing events to occur much in the same sense as gravity causes objects to fall. This definition is helpful in clarifying the distinction between monotheism and paganism (which we assume to be wrong but meaningful) but seems doomed to be

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Associate Editor



BRIGHT LIGHTS

Abe Rosenberg

Maybe you missed it. Maybe you were too busy studying for an exam or writing a paper. Perhaps you did see it, but didn't stop to admire it. Too bad. It will be a whole year before you get another chance to view one of the most beautiful Chanukah sights in New York; one that took place right in our own back yard, each night of the holiday.

I'm talking about the way the Rubin and Morgenstern dormitories glowed with the brilliant light of a hundred Chanukah menorot — one soft orange glow in every window — all during Chanukah. Standing on Amsterdam Ave. in the evening and seeing these two usually drab buildings suddenly illuminated, one couldn't help but feel both happy and proud. Here was "*pirsum haness*" in the ultimate form, a Jewish tradition proudly displayed for all the world to see. After all, isn't that the way it should be? Let the Gentiles decorate their trees and sing their carols. The Jewish people take a back seat to no one any longer. Our beautifully meaningful festival of Chanukah provides just one opportunity for us to openly

and proudly recall our heritage and reaffirm our devotion to G-d. Another such example is apparent on *Sukkot*, when we boldly carry our *lulavim* to *shul* — down Park Ave., across Queens Blvd. and along Pelham Parkway — with no shame, but with the dignity and joy no longer particular to the non-Jews on Palm Sunday. Every *Pesach* the news media flocks to our neighborhoods as we delight in showing off our matzo bakeries. And as for Chanukah, there isn't a bank in New York which dares to operate in December without at least one electric menorah in its window, in addition to the "other" holiday fare of this season.

All of this is especially pleasing because "taking a back seat" and remaining in the shadows used to be the American Orthodox way of practicing Judaism. We weren't as open or as prideful of our religion ten or fifteen years ago as we are today. Most of us are old enough to remember the days when *frum* people would tell us things like, "It's okay to wear a *yarmulke* at home or in the synagogue, but wear a hat in the street, *tateleh*." Our

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